

Message Text

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71

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 141725Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7061

S E C R E T LONDON 00578

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, UK, IO

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PLANS

REF: STATE 007199

1. PER REFTEL, WE CONFIRMED SECRETARY'S APPROVAL OF DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PLAN TO JACKSON OF FCO ON JAN 14. WE ALSO GAVE HIM AMPLIFYING INFORMATION CONTAINED PARAGRAPH TWO REFTEL. HE SAID THAT UK EMBASSY WASHINGTON HAD REPORTED JANUARY 11 STODDART LETTER CONFIRMING REQUEST FOR EXPANSION, AND SAID THAT HMG IS PROCEEDING WITH ITS CONSIDERATION OF PLAN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE COULD NOT PREDICT EXACTLY WHEN AN HMG RESPONSE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING BUT SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE THIS PROJECT HIS UNDIVIDED ATTENTION. HE SAID THAT EARLY AVAILABILITY OF AMPLIFYING MATERIAL WOULD HELP HMG TO COMPLETE ITS STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINISTERS. HE ADDED THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO DESIRABILITY OF INVITING TEAM FROM WASHINGTON BUT HMG DOES NOT HAVE PRELIMINARY POSITION ON THIS POINT YET.

2. EMBASSY HAS NOW RECEIVED MATERIAL POUCHED ON JANUARY 9. WHILE WE ARE SURE THAT FCO IS PROCEEDING WITH BEST POSSIBLE WILL, WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF MINISTERIAL APPROVAL IS OBTAINED BY JANUARY 28. COMPLEXITIES OF PROBLEM, IMPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA, AND MOST PARTICULARLY PREOCCUPATION OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS WITH CURRENT POLITICAL/INDUSTRIAL CRISIS SUGGEST THAT EARLY FIRM DECISION COULD REQUIRE A LONGER TIME TO OBTAIN.

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TIONS WITH COUNTRIES IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA, AND MOST PARTICULARLY PREOCCUPATION OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS WITH CURRENT POLITICAL/INDUSTRIAL CRISIS SUGGEST THAT EARLY FIRM DECISION COULD REQUIRE A LONGER TIME TO OBTAIN.

WE ESTIMATE THAT HMG RESPONSE, EVEN IF IT IS IN PRINCIPLE ONLY, PROBABLY WILL HAVE TO BE CLEARED AT HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL IN HMG AND THAT IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO GET CONCERNED MINISTERS TO FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM DURING THE CURRENT POLITICAL MANEUVERING WHICH COULD LEAD TO AN EARLY GENERAL ELECTION.

SOHM

SECRET

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